THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE (SHRI BHUVNESH CHATURVEDI): (a) to (e) According to available information, militants belonging to the terrorist outfits Harkat-ul-Ansar and Hizo-ul-Mujahideen have holed themselves up in the township of Charar-e-Sharief where the shrine of the Sufi Saint Hazrat Noor-ud Din-Noorani is situated. The State Government has strengthened the Security arrangements in the vicinity of the township to check any further infiltration and escalation of the situation. There has been intermittent firing between the security forces and the militants but despite provocation the security forces have maintained the utmost restraint to ensure against any harm to civilian life and property, including any damage to the shrine. A large number of people, including women and children, have left the town due to fear and apprehension caused by the presence of militants in the town. However, of late, some families have returned to their homes in the town.

(f) and (g) Government are aware of such reports and of the attempts of Pakistan and its protege groups in the State to use their own acts of violating the sanctity of religious places and trampelling upon the sentiments of the local people, or inability to prevent this, for spreading dis-information and provoking the people.

There is no seige of the shrine and the residents of the town are able to move in and out without impediments. Government had also offered safe passage to the foreign nationals present in the town upto the LOC if they surrendered, which has not drawn any response. A close watch is being kept on the situation and such further action will be taken as may be required keeping in view the situation, the topography of the area and the sanctity of the shrine.

Damage caused to properties of Kashmiri-Pandit migrants

3943. SHRI JAGMOHAN: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) the number of houses of Kashmiri Pandit-migrants in the Valley burnt, damaged or looted;

(b) the number of cases in which compensation has been paid or insurance claims settled; and

(c) the details of the amount so far paid?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE (SHRI BHUVNESH CHATURVEDI): (a) to (c) Information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.

Outcome of Jammu Republic Day Bomb-blast investigations

3944. SHRI JAGMOHAN:
SHRIMATI VEENA VERMA:
SHRI SUSHILKUMAR SAMBHAJIRAO SHINDE:

Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether with the arrest of a Pakistani terrorist agent, the police authorities in Jammu and Kashmir have resolved the case relating explosions at the Republic Day function in the State in which a number of persons were killed and the State Governor amongst others were injured on January 26, 1995;

(b) if so, what are the details of the plot unearthed and the persons, Indians and foreigners apprehended in connection therewith; and

(c) what follow-up steps have so far been taken in connection therewith?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE (SHRI BHUVNESH CHATURVEDI): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) Only one person, namely Mond. Irfan s|o Mond. Ayub r/o Gari Mohalla, Village Tanda District Gujarat in Pakistan, has been arrested in this case. Further investigations are, continuing. It would not, therefore, be feasible or prudent to disclose further details at this stage.

Resuscitation of J&K from political coma

3945. SHRI VISHNU KANT SHASTRI: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to a news report published in the 'Indian Express' (New Delhi) dated 6th April, 1995 under the caption "Resuscitating J&K from its political coma" regarding the functioning of the Ministerial panel on J&K; and

(b) if so, what is the reaction of Government thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE (SHRI BHUVNESH CHATURVEDI): (a) and (b) The Government are aware of the press report in question. The Group of Ministers has been set up to consider and deliberate upon issues relating to restoration of the political process in J&K. It is taking action accordingly.

Lathi-charge on media persons at Jammu

3946. SHRI VIRENDRA KATARIA: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Police and C.R.P.F. resorted to a lathi charge on peaceful media persons at Jammu on 31st March, 1995; if so, the reasons therefor;

(b) whether it is also a fact that many scribes including women scribes were injured in the lathi-charge; and

(c) what action has been taken by Government in the matter?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE (SHRI BHUVNESH CHATURVEDI): (a) to (c) On 31.3.1995, local pressmen who were taking out a procession to observe the "Press Day", were stopped near the Secretariat, where prohibitary orders under section 144 Cr. P.C were in force. When they tried to break the police cordon, mild force had to be used resulting in minor injuries to 4-5 pressmen, including a woman. The Press lodged a protest against the incident and declared that they would boycott all official functions till action was taken against the police personnel involved in the incident. The State Government ordered a magisterial inquiry into the incident and a Sub-Inspector of Police was placed under suspension. The local Press also set up a Committee of Inquiry to go into the incident, after which they had further discussions with the State Government, pursuant to which the matter was amicably settled and the protest was called-off.

Pending cases against companies

3947. SHRI O. P. KOHLI: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government had undertaken an analysis of the rising cases against companies;

(b) if so, whether the analysis has been completed and if so, with what results;

(c) the reasons for the rising number of cases against the companies and the steps taken to remedy the situation;

(d) the number of cases pending against the companies as on the 31st December, 1994 and how do those compare with the preceding three years; and